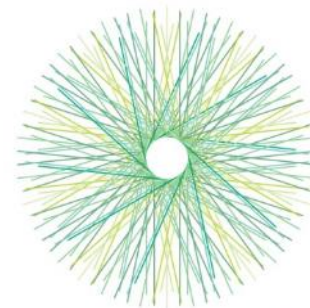


# Operational Groups Assessment and upcoming activities of the EIP-AGRI Network



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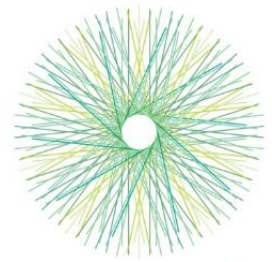


European Rural Networks' meeting  
Sergiu Didicescu, EIP-AGRI Service Point  
Bucharest, 13 June 2019



## Operational Groups (OG) assessment 2018

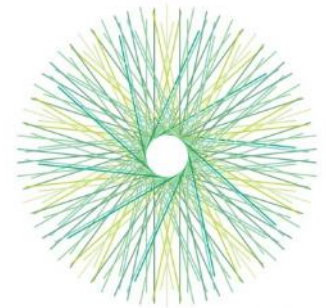
# Background and aims of the study



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- ▶ Assessment of the set-up and state-of-play of the implementation of EIP-AGRI Operational Groups (OGs) - until first quarter 2018
- ▶ Insight into OGs
  - Thematic focus, challenges addressed
  - Project approaches and partnership structures
  - External collaborations and networking
  - Results and dissemination strategies
  - Support received on regional/national and EU-level
- ▶ Input for DG AGRI/Service Point to plan EIP-AGRI network activities
- ▶ IDEA Consult was contracted

# Main steps in the study



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- ▶ Database and clustering exercise
- ▶ Survey to OGs
- ▶ Case studies (9 OGs)
- ▶ Conclusions



## OG database and clustering exercise



# Clustering exercise

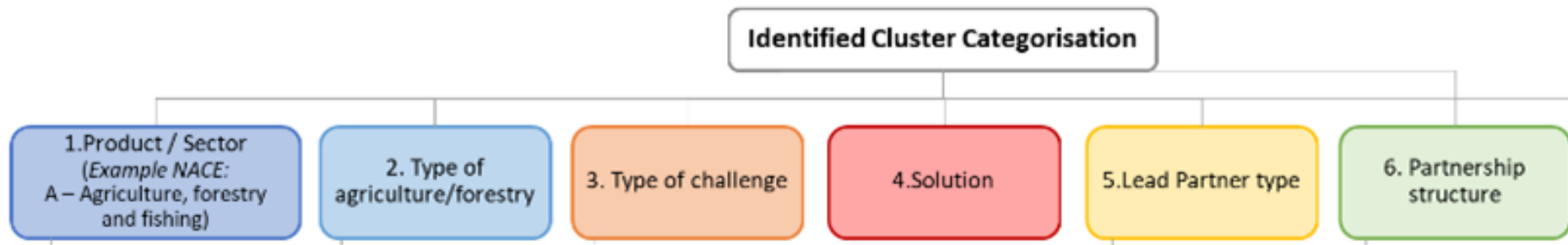
- ▶ Collection and integration of datasets of 601 OGs into one Excel (until first quarter 2018)
- ▶ Definition of cluster (sub)categories
- ▶ Assignment of all OGs to the different cluster categories
- ▶ Exercise by project team based on SFC keywords and project descriptions, validated by survey

## Considerations:

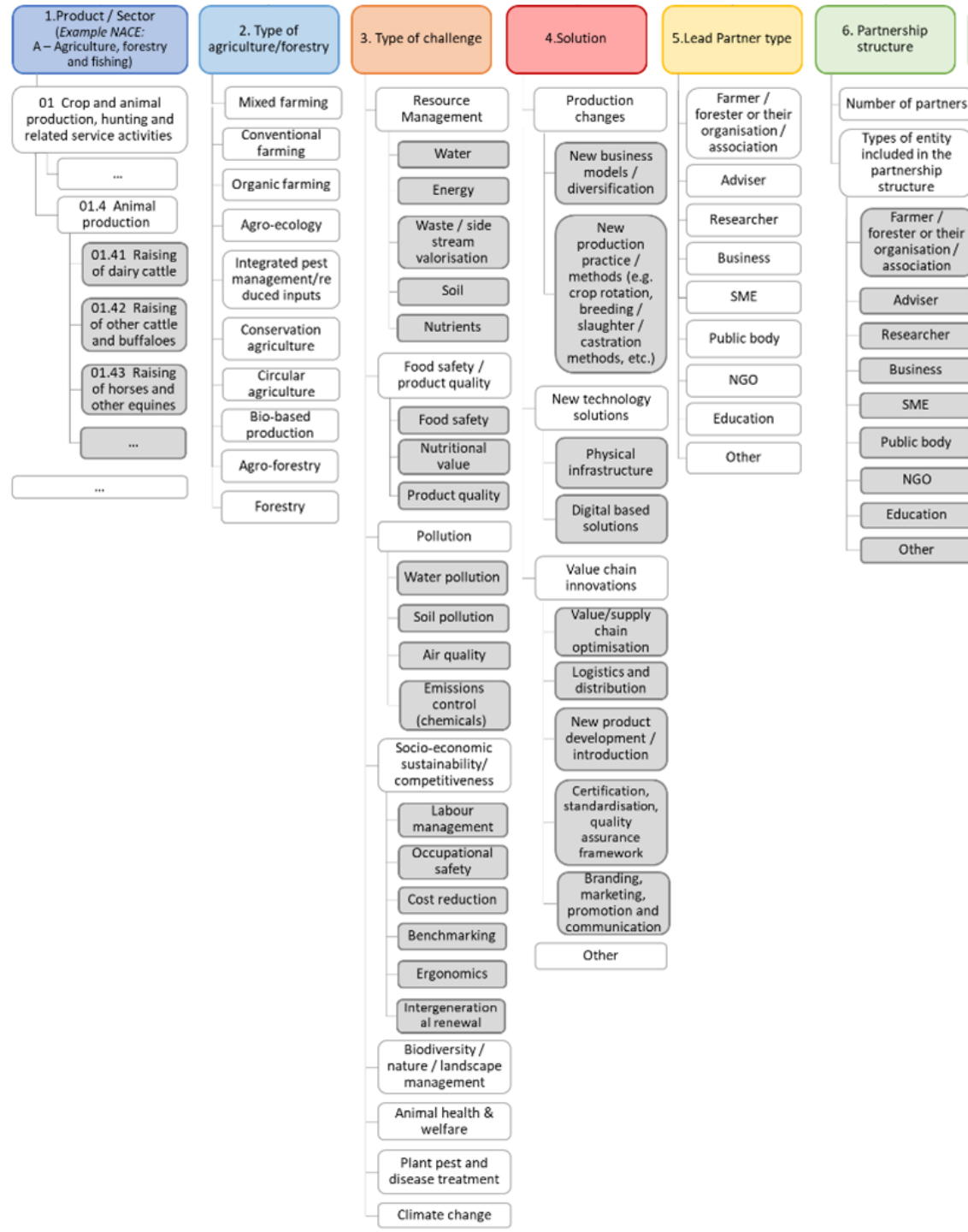
- ▶ Some information missing or too limited
- ▶ Cluster categories not mutually exclusive, so OGs attributable to more than one specific category



# Clustering exercise









# OG database analysis



Spread of the Operational Groups  
across various EU countries

Country	Count
Germany	109
France	105
Italy	96
Portugal	85
Spain	58
The Netherlands	44
Sweden	31
United Kingdom	18
Austria	13
Ireland	13
Belgium	10
Czech Republic	9
Finland	5
Lithuania	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>601</b>

# OG database analysis



## Lead partner and other partners

- ▶ OGs cover mix of partners and partnership structures
- ▶ Research organisations as main lead partners; other lead partner types well represented
- ▶ Farmers (organisations) most represented partner

Lead Partner Type	N° of OGs	%
Researcher / Research Institute	173	32%
Farmer/forester or their organisation/ association of farmers or foresters	112	20%
Business / SME	80	15%
Advisor	65	12%
Other	33	6%
Public body	20	4%
NGO	15	3%
Education	13	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>100%</b>

Overall partner types	Amount
Farmer/forester or their organisation/ association of farmers or foresters	220
Researcher / Research Institute	182
Business / SME	115
Advisor	99
Public body	84
Education	60
Other	55
NGO	29
<b>Total number of partners in 239 OGs</b>	<b>844</b>

# Clustering exercise



## Type of agricultural / forestry activity

- ▶ Conventional farming main type of agriculture, but...
- ▶ Combination of 'organic', 'conservation', 'ecologic', 'circular', 'biobased' shows that majority of OGs (53%) have a focus on ecological/environmental sustainability

Type of agriculture/forestry activity	N° of OGs	%
Conventional farming	168	28%
Organic farming	121	20%
Conservation agriculture	75	13%
Integrated pest management/reduced inputs	69	12%
Agro-ecology	42	7%
Circular agriculture	41	7%
Bio-based production	33	6%
Mixed farming	24	4%
Agro-forestry	18	3%
Forestry	10	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>601</b>	<b>100%</b>



# Clustering exercise

## OG agricultural challenge / opportunity faced

- ▶ Resource management main challenge
- ▶ Food safety /Product quality also important
- ▶ 'Pest/disease treatment' and 'Animal health/welfare' (19%)
- ▶ 'Pollution', 'biodiversity' and 'climate change' combined substantial (17%)

Type of challenge	N° of OGs	%
Resource Management (total)	175	29%
Resource management (soil)	54	9%
Resource management (water)	40	7%
Resource management (nutrients)	39	6%
Resource management (waste/side stream valorisation)	32	5%
Resource management (energy)	7	1%
Resource management (not specified)	3	1%
Food safety / product quality	107	18%
Socio-economic sustainability/competitiveness	86	14%
Pest and disease treatment	59	10%
Animal health and welfare	54	9%
Pollution	41	7%
Biodiversity / nature / landscape management	40	7%
Climate change	20	3%
Other	19	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>601</b>	<b>100%</b>



# Clustering exercise

## OG focus / solution

Focus of the project	N° of OGs	%
Production changes	326	55%
Value Chain innovations	144	24%
New technology solutions	105	18%
Other	17	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>100%</b>



## Survey to OGs

# Survey analysis - Response



- ▶ To whole OG database in 14 Member States
- ▶ June – July 2018 through Google Forms
- ▶ In English, Spanish, Italian, French and German
- ▶ Response of 236 OGs (39%)

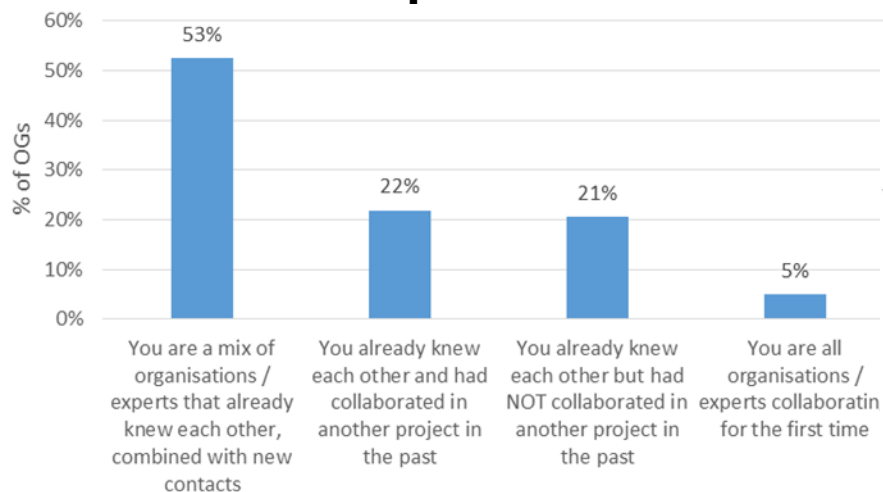


# Survey analysis - Partnership

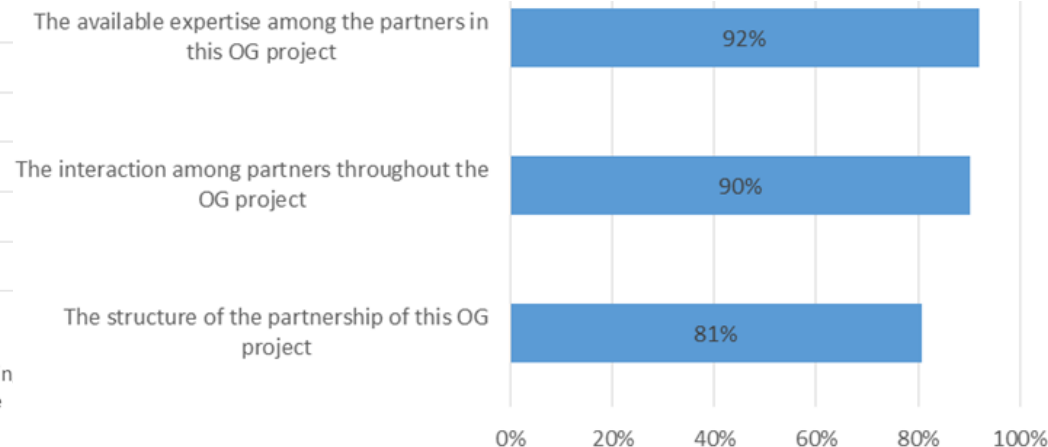


- ▶ 96% OGs include partners that already knew each other (partially or entirely)
- ▶ 78% of partnerships are **newly formed** specifically for the OG project
- ▶ 92% OGs include farmers (organisations) as formal partners; 75% include research organisations
- ▶ 50% OGs include business/SMEs; circa 40% advisors and/or public actors; education (27%) and NGOs (12%) also represented
- ▶ Great majority (very) satisfied with the partnership structure, available expertise and interaction within their OG partnership

## OG Partnership Structure

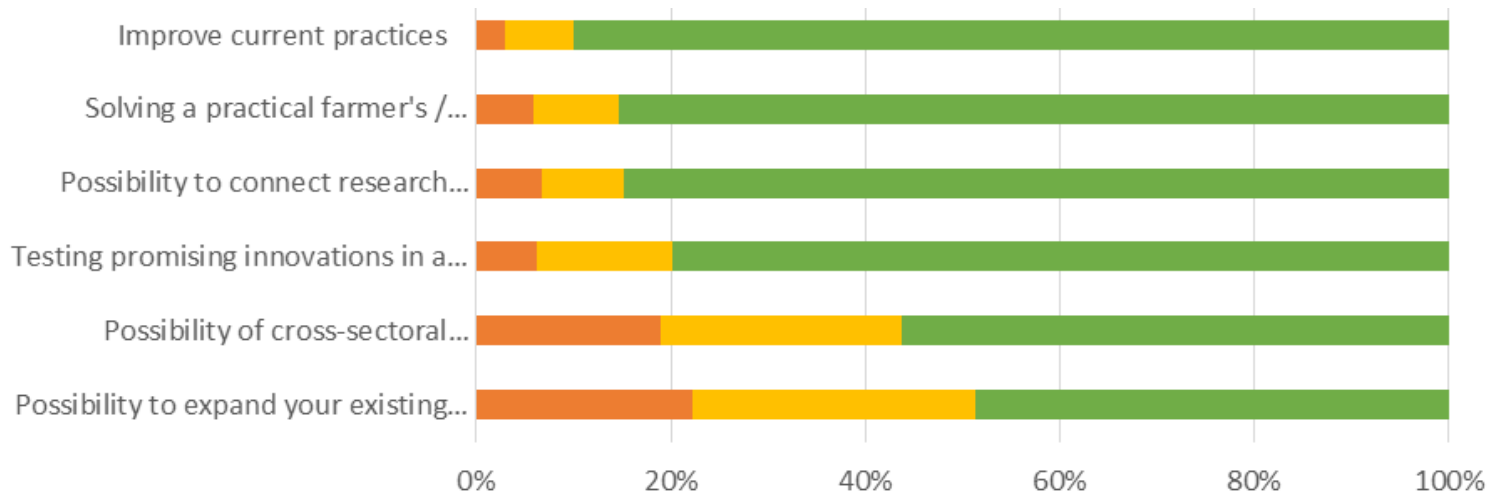


## Satisfaction with the structure, expertise and interaction in the project



# Survey analysis – OGs aims and motivation

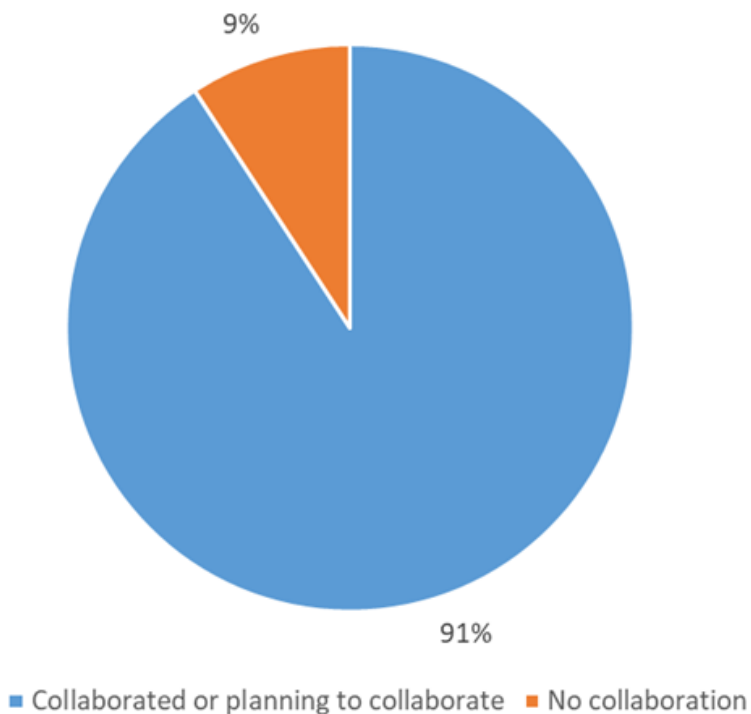
## Main reasons to start an OG = improving practices and solving practical problems by connecting to research and innovation



	Possibility to expand your existing network to new partners / experts	Possibility of cross-sectoral cooperation	Testing promising innovations in a real setting in the farm or forest	Possibility to connect research with farming / forestry practice	Solving a practical farmer's / forester's problem	Improve current practices
■ Slightly/Not at all important	22%	19%	6%	7%	6%	3%
■ Important	29%	25%	14%	8%	9%	7%
■ Fairly/Very Important	49%	56%	80%	85%	85%	90%

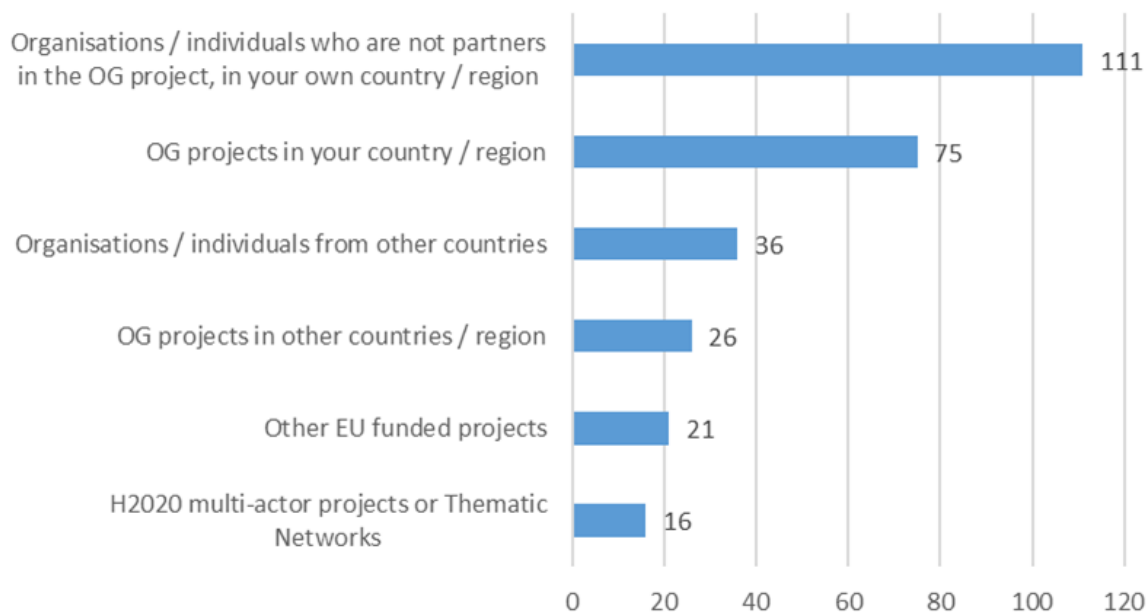
■ Slightly/Not at all important    ■ Important    ■ Fairly/Very Important

# Survey analysis - Collaboration

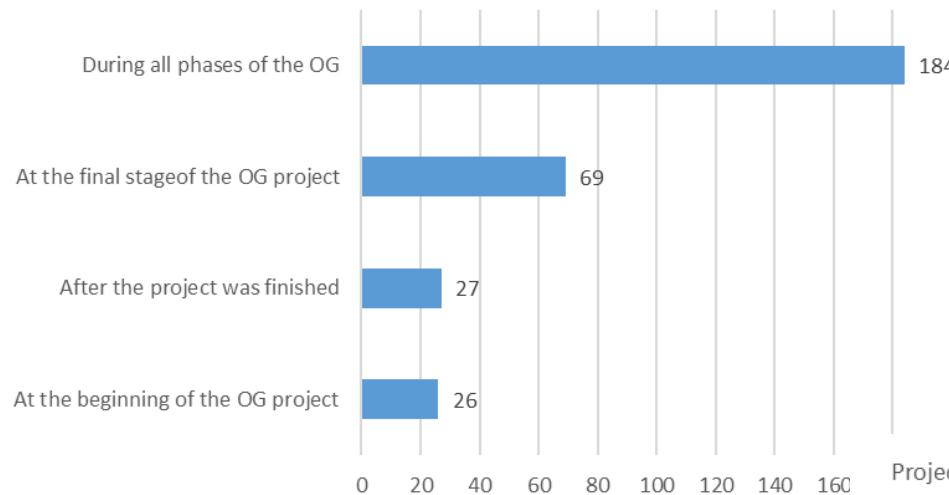


**The great majority of OGs are collaborating or plan to with external entities (91%!)**

- ▶ Mainly within own region/country
- ▶ Circa 26% across borders
- ▶ Circa 14% with H2020 or other EU projects
- ▶ Mainly limited to (informal) information exchange through existing contacts



# Survey analysis - Outcomes and dissemination



## Dissemination activities mostly throughout whole project period

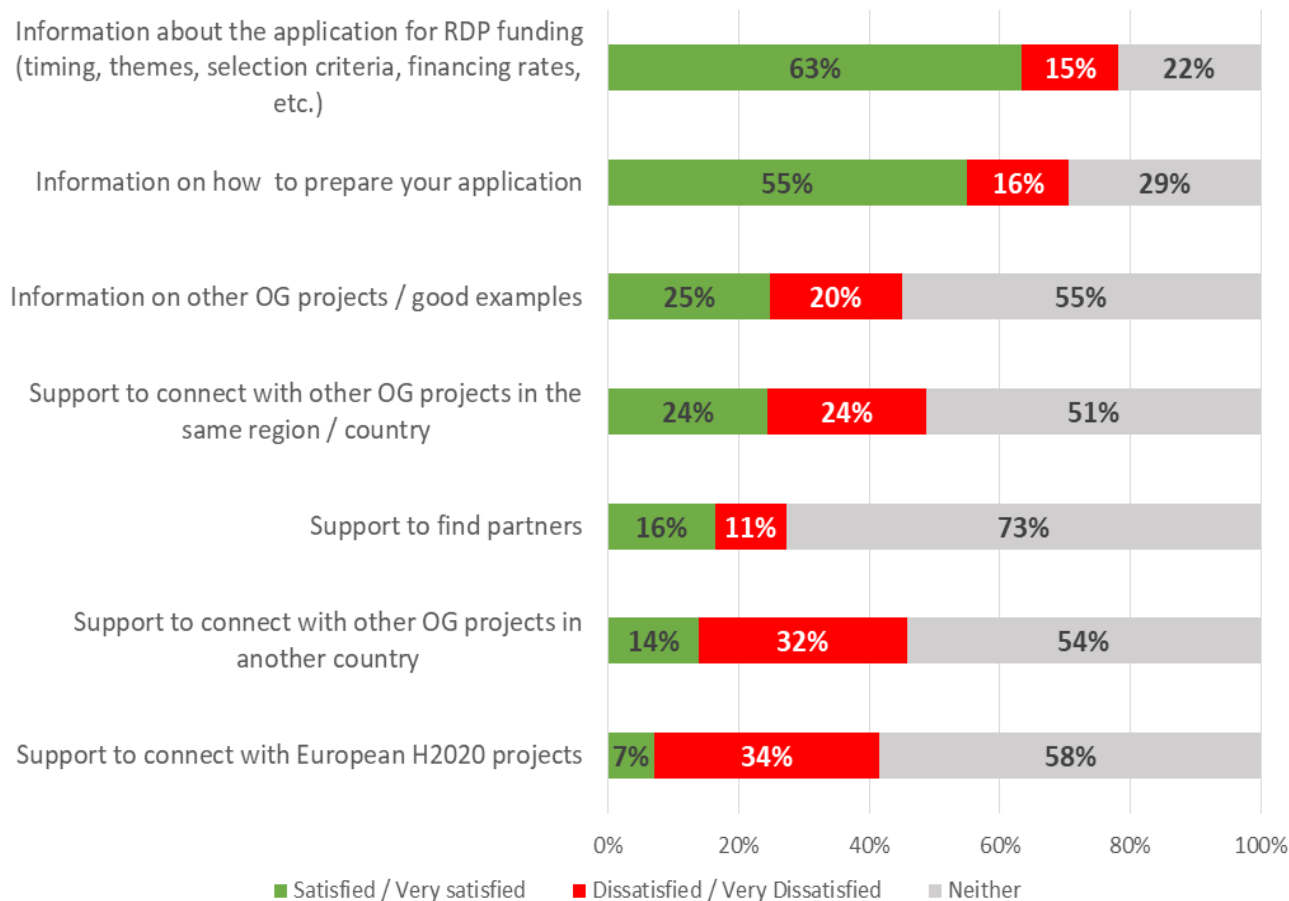
- ▶ Mainly using own channels
- ▶ Only 10% use EIP-AGRI or MA's website for wider dissemination



# Survey analysis – Support provided to OGs



- ▶ Majority of OGs (very) satisfied with the information during application phase
- ▶ Quarter to third of OGs (very) dissatisfied with support to connect to other projects
- ▶ High rates of 'neither' striking – some aspects no support needed?





## Case studies

# Case studies



- ▶ Selection of 9 cases among survey respondents (from 9 countries)
- ▶ In-depth interviews with lead partner, again in EN, FR, DE, SP, IT (Nov 2018 – Jan 2019)
- ▶ Representative spread of categories (type of agric., challenge, solution)
- ▶ Topics to discuss, following up on the survey responses
  - ▶ Project / partnership set-up and structure
  - ▶ Main activities and expected outcomes
  - ▶ Collaboration with other projects, initiatives or actors
  - ▶ Results and dissemination
  - ▶ Support obtained throughout the project



# 9 Case Studies



Title		Country
1	Plant for a customer	Belgium
2	BRIDE Biodiversity Regeneration In a Dairying Environment	Ireland
3	Vineyard 2.0	France
4	CompetitiveSouthBerries - Competitive and sustainable small fruits: innovative cultural techniques for the extension of the production season	Portugal
5	Working group extended suckling period	Austria
6	Control of additional water use in crop production - situational, site -specific and automated	Germany
7	GOFOPE15: Operational Group for the Transition to Organic Farming on Agricultural and Livestock Farms	Spain
8	Optimization of conservation agricultural systems through better management of cultivation techniques	Italy
9	Infofusion Fusarium	Sweden



(some) Conclusions

# Conclusions



Confirmed **great interest** in the EIP-AGRI OG framework and instrument

- ▶ Since start of study, number of OG has **increased** to *circa* 1.000 and growing
- ▶ Some MS launch a set of OG calls, both open and thematic aspects
- ▶ 91% of OGs (survey) are positive about their experience and **would recommend** other actors/organisations to become involved in an OG project
- ▶ OG partners highlight such projects could not have been realised with other national or European funding frameworks

# Conclusions



**Partnership and project structures** in three circles help connecting and disseminating to farmers' communities

- ▶ OG partnership usually consist of a few **core partners**, complemented by group of partners for practical parts of the project (2<sup>nd</sup> circle)
- ▶ Regular interaction and involvement of **wider target group** built into project structure through testing & demo activities
- ▶ **3<sup>rd</sup> circle** of up to 100 farmers/end-users not formally part of the partnership, testing new solutions in real farming practice and providing direct feedback
- ▶ This structuring ensures **efficient project coordination** while providing practical **feedback mechanism and dissemination channels** to farmers' community
- ▶ Farmers are still reluctant to take administrative lead as they lack the capacity and resources to deal with the related obligations (pre-financing)

# Conclusions



## Outcomes and dissemination

- ▶ OGs devote substantial attention to **dissemination in a variety of ways** throughout the project
- ▶ OGs interestingly **link rural-agricultural community with other sectors and industries**

## Support

- ▶ OGs **satisfied with administrative support** received: useful advice from Managing Authorities
- ▶ **Innovation support services also important** in setting up the right partnership structure and preparing the application

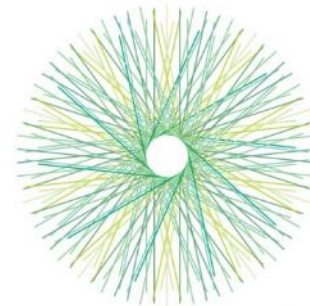
# Conclusions



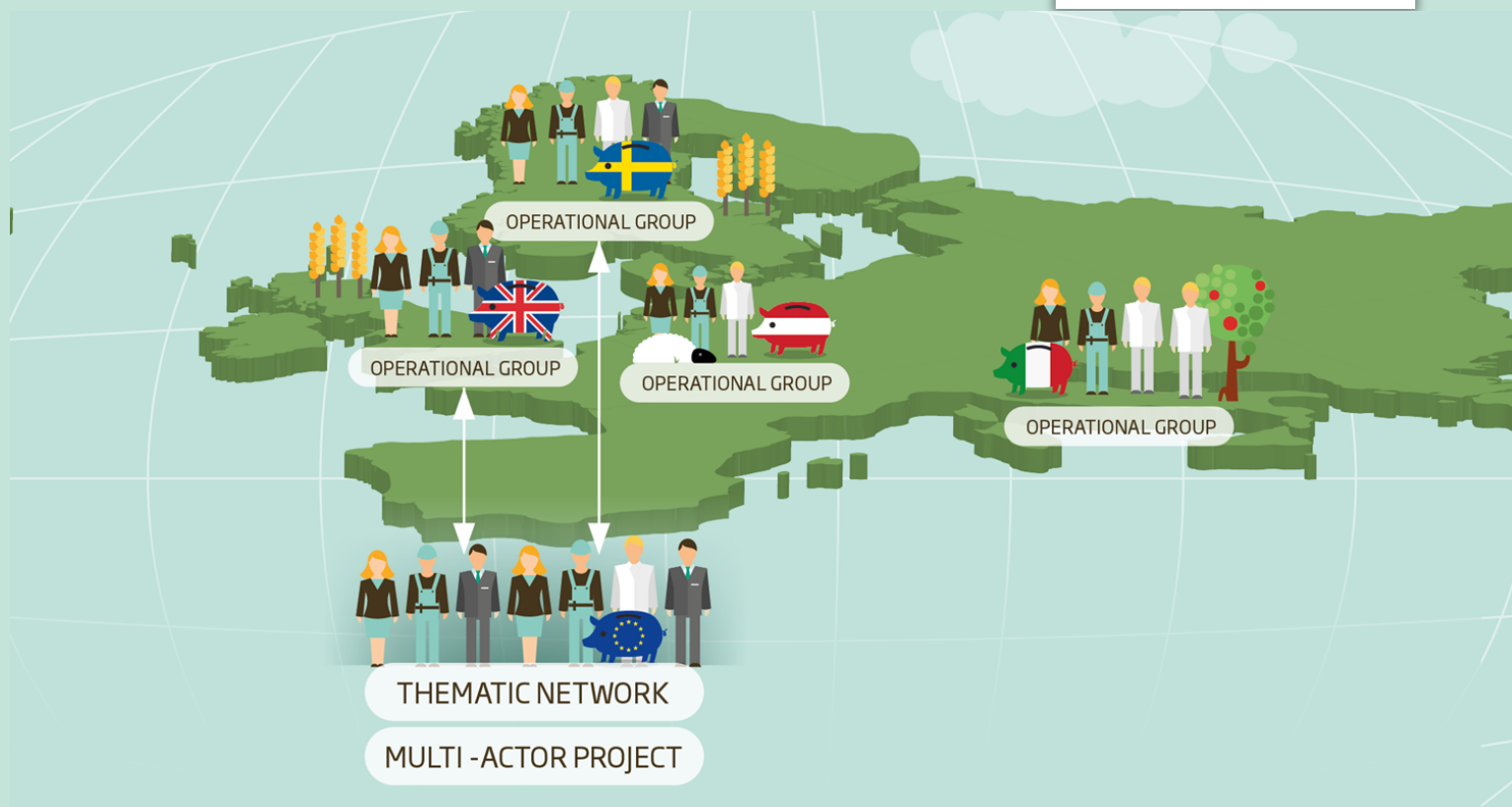
OGs as vehicles to connect to other (rural) innovation initiatives and actors

- ▶ OGs **discovering the collaboration potential** beyond the scope of the own OG, and interested to explore further
- ▶ 90% of OGs **established relations with organisations outside the partnership** or intend to do so
- ▶ **Need to better facilitate this**, e.g. by more structured and accessible information on the themes and approaches of OGs
- ▶ OGs would welcome **more pro-active support** for this by national/regional support structures
- ▶ Importance to communicate about OGs in a timely and complete way
  - ▶ E.g. making information available via the EIP Common format to make connections outside the OG possible (other OGs, H2020 projects, etc.)

# Upcoming activities of the EIP-AGRI Network

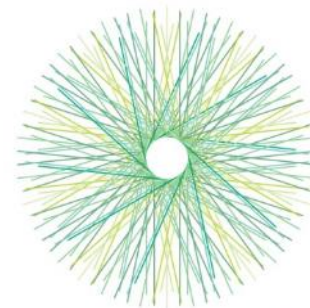


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# Upcoming activities



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## June

**4-5 June - Workshop 'Cropping for the future: networking for crop rotation and crop diversification'**

Almere, the Netherlands

The workshop will focus on crop rotation and crop diversification, while considering their benefits on ecosystem services

**11-12 June - Focus Group**  
Protecting agricultural soils from contamination  
1st meeting

Bari, Italy

"How to prevent agricultural soil contamination and how to address the problem of contaminated soils?"

**19-20 June - Focus Group**  
Reducing antimicrobial use in poultry farming  
1st meeting

Dublin, Ireland

"How to reduce the use of antimicrobial treatments in poultry in order to fight the spread of antimicrobial resistance?"

**25-26 June**  
Agri-Innovation Summit 2019

Lisieux, Normandy – France

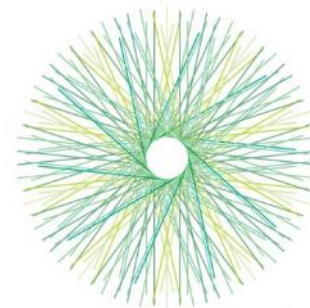
The event is dedicated to the contribution of EIP-AGRI for the transition to agroecology

funded by



European  
Commission

# Upcoming activities



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## Autumn

**18-19 September - Focus Group**  
Pests and diseases of the olive tree

Crete, Greece

“How to increase the sustainability of olive growing, taking into account the risks brought by pests and diseases?”

**07-08 October - Focus Group**  
Bee health and sustainable  
beekeeping  
2nd meeting

Location tbd

“How to ensure the sustainability of beekeeping in the face of challenges linked to pests and diseases, intensification of agriculture and climate change?”

**29-30 October - Workshop**  
Small is smart" - Innovative  
solutions for small agricultural and  
forestry holdings

Bucharest, Romania

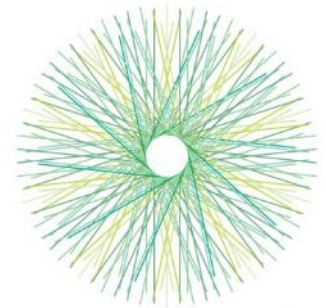
“Promote networking among people and projects dealing with innovation and adoption of new technologies in small farm and forestry holdings”

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Commission

**Thank you  
for your  
attention!**



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